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Grand Canyon News Release

Release date: Immediate

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Date: December 11, 2008

New Exhibit in Grand Canyon's Geology Museum at Yavapai Point Wins Prestigious NAI Award

Grand Canyon, AZ. – Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent Steve Martin is proud to announce that on Thursday, November 13, 2008, the exhibits in the Geology Museum at Yavapai Point, on the South Rim of the park, were awarded top honors in the interior exhibit category of the National Association for Interpretation's (NAI's) Interpretive Media Awards Competition.

Each year, public and private organizations engaged in resource interpretation submit recently completed publications, books, movies, pamphlets, and exhibits for review and competition in NAI's various media award categories. The submissions are rated by a panel of professionals in the field of interpretation and/or media development, and are judged on criteria that support NAI's purpose: "inspiring leadership and excellence to advance heritage interpretation...." Exhibits, for example, are judged not only on overall quality of the exhibition itself, but on how well each exhibit applies interpretive principles, how well and appropriately each communicates the intended message to its audience, and how effectively each uses art and technology to engage users.

This year's winners included submissions from private individuals and companies, county and state agencies, the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and from as far away as Canada and Australia. So, when the exhibition designed for the Geology Museum at Yavapai Point won first place in the interior exhibit category, "it was a tremendous honor," said Superintendent Martin.

The new exhibits, officially opened to the public in May of 2007, were designed to provide one location in the park where visitors could gain a comprehensive understanding of Grand Canyon's geologic history. The exhibition's design team also wanted the exhibits to fit in with the building's original design and purpose: the museum's location was chosen in 1928 by eminent



Project Manager Ellen Seeley accepts Grand Canyon's NAI Media Award from NAI President Jim Covel (left) and Executive Director Tim Merriman. NAI Photo

geologists to showcase the geology of Grand Canyon. The entire exhibition succeeds beautifully; and the judges' comments make it clear that they were impressed with the amount of thought and work that went into its planning and design. "The exhibit itself is very well designed with a rich palette of colors and a good variety of visual, tactile, and written material that did not compete with the incredible views. How did you do that?"

Visitors to the exhibit can spend as little or as much time as they want and still take away the important messages. According to Ellen Seeley, the exhibition's project manager and lead, the various parts of the project "were deliberately designed for multiple layers of learning." Exhibit titles, large print text and graphics in the front room of the exhibition are intended to convey important information to those visitors who have little time or geologic background. The back room provides opportunities for more in-depth exploration; and touchable exhibits help children of all ages explore geology.

According to the competition's judges, a quote etched onto the glass, like so many other elements of the exhibit, is "reflective of deference to the geological masterpiece framed in the window." The exhibit's overall design is "well-integrated" and "does a good job of simplifying a very complex and difficult-to-interpret topic." And even the writing is "top-notch...very powerful and effective."

What does all of this mean for park visitors? Regardless of time or level of interest, people of all ages can be assured of an enjoyable and informative experience when they visit the Geology Museum at Yavapai Point (also known as the Yavapai Observation Station) on the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park.

For more information about these new exhibits or the park's NAI Media Award, please call the park's Branch Chief for Interpretive Media and Design, Ellen Seeley, at 928-638-7836. To learn more about NAI, please visit their web site at www.interpnet.com. For general information on the Yavapai Observation Station or how to get there, or to see pictures of some of the new exhibits, please visit the park's web site at www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/visitorcenters.htm, and click on the appropriate links.



Geology Museum at Yavapai Point/Yavapai Observation Station.



Visitors enjoying some of the new exhibits.

NPS Photos

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